

Conceptual structure of SLAVA/FAME/RUHM in Russian, American and German consciousness

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Abstract

© the author(s). This paper investigates similarities and differences in the conceptualization of the lexemes SLAVA, FAME, and RUHM by culture and by individual perceptions among speakers of Russian, American English, and German respectively. Methods consisted of a free association experiment and lexicographic and phraseological analysis using dictionaries and Internet sources. All three cultures characterized the terms both positively and negatively, however each culture's characterization was unique. Russian text sources align 'slava' with wealth, but also with rumor and gossip; American English sources characterize 'fame' as eternal, but also as something to be avoided, while German sources consider 'ruhm' as a good stimulus, but one which may also be accompanied by envy. The cognitive linguistics approach provides exploration of cognitive consciousness at a cultural level as well as in the core, revealing that despite differences across the speakers' cultures, the speakers themselves show more similarity in their perceptions of the corresponding concepts.

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Keywords

Association experiment, Cognitive linguistics, Concept, Concept core and periphery